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### **Presentation Transcript**

#### **Bible Stories for Adults, Part 3 – Adam and Eve**

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Our title for today is *Bible Stories for Adults – Adam and Eve*. As I stated earlier in this series, we're looking at the stories in the Bible from the perspective of what God wants us to know from each story, rather than what we think it might mean. Let me explain what I mean by that.

In Matthew 18:10, Jesus said:

**Matthew 18:10** – *See that you do not despise these little ones, for I tell you, that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father, who is heaven.*

I once, along with many others, was confronted by a man who took exception to the idea that God had a face. He reasoned that God was not physical, so he took up no space. Now, a human nose, for example, does take up space. Consequently, God could not have a nose or a face to put it on. He only talks to us in these terms, this man reasoned, because He knows we can't possibly comprehend what He is really like. This kind of reasoning was first practiced by the ancient Greeks. The reason this man was using Greek logic was an attempt to go further into what the Bible means – going beyond what was there.

I want to mention two problems with this approach. The first one is clear. Jesus tells us, in His own words, that God *has* a face. That's in the Bible. So we can believe it, if we will. God tells us that He and Jesus do not lie. So there's another reason why we can believe it. We can bank on what they tell us, we're told in scripture. Second, there are all sorts of warnings in the Bible about applying human reasoning to scripture. Would you like to see two of them? Well, right at the end of the Bible – at the end of the book of Revelation – we're told not to add to or take away from what the Bible says. It's God's work, not ours. He wrote it, not us. Our job is to try to understand what He's saying to us and to understand *His* reasoning, rather than applying *our* reasoning to what's there. And that's because His ways are infinitely higher than ours. God tell us

that in Isaiah 55:9. Certainly everybody has to believe that, if we worship God, that God would be greater than we are. So we're talking about God here, not some well-educated human.

Are there any times when we might look outside the Bible to help us understand it? Well, I can think of a couple times. One is to check up on the meaning of words and phrases. All the translators were human, so they could have made mistakes or were not able to convey the full meaning, due to the differences in the languages they were working with. I'll give you an example or two as we move through the story of Adam and Eve later today.

Another thing we might need help with is context. We no longer think like the people of various ages past, due to cultural differences. We no longer have the same customs they had. We know nothing about their idioms. They used different expressions of speech. We have ours. They had theirs. We, sometimes, don't understand theirs, as used in scripture. Of course, learning about cultural differences could be a slippery slope, if we somehow manage to come up with a conclusion that contradicts the text. What I try to do, when going outside the Bible to understand a passage, is to find another passage that supports the conclusions, and not to rely on just one. The Bible tells us that it doesn't contradict itself. When we do that – when we find supportive passages – then that enhances the chances that what we suspected might be true.

So, as we move through our story today, please remember that we're going to apply seven rules as we go. Just by way of review, I'm going to cover them. One is that God communicates His will to us in the Bible, so we should be looking for it. Since the Bible claims to be inspired by God, we assume it is perfect – in tact – and does not contradict itself. We will not confuse what men commonly say with what God tells us in the Bible. The Bible is God's instruction for how to live life. (I haven't numbered these, but this is the fifth one.) The Bible is three stories in one. The big story is God's salvation plan. And the first smaller story is how things got the way they are today and how God will fix them. The second is a record of the different ways God has worked with people through the ages. And the third one is how God is taking us from the way we are now to the way He is. Six – at any given point in study, it's good to ask ourselves, "What's the point God is trying to make here?" – not that He has to try, but *we* have to try to understand it. And seven, to understand that we must believe that God knows better than we do.

Okay, so let's read Genesis 2 today to see how we all came to be – not through human thought, but according to God. In Genesis, chapter 2, verse 1, the story picks up that we started with last time.

**Genesis 2:1-3** – *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day, God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it, God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.*

We covered this a bit last time, but it's so important we want to take a second look at it. Let's look at that first word *blessed*. Now here's a case of confirming the translation. What did that mean to Moses, who probably was the one who wrote that – *blessed*? Well, when God does something good to someone or something, He's blessing them. How do I know that? Well, I looked it up in English and in Hebrew. It means the same thing. So God did something good to the seventh day when He rested on it – since He blessed it.

What else did He do? Well, we're told that He made that day holy. Well, what does that word mean? Well, it means special in that God has assigned purpose to it – set apart for something special to God – and usually, also, to those who seek Him. It has God written all over it. You know, we can read where Moses approached God, and God said, "Take off your sandals, for you stand on holy ground." Well, what was holy about it? Well, God was there. And so we also see in this verse God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He'd done in creation. Does He tell us to keep it here? Well, not in so many words. To find out why it's been set apart, we have to look elsewhere in the Bible. So, let's just do that as an example of how to support one scripture with another. Let's go to Isaiah 58:13.

**Isaiah 58:13** – *If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath – from doing your pleasure on My holy day – and call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy day of the LORD honorable – if you honor it, not doing your own ways or seeking your own pleasure – or talking idly, then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth, and I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob, your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.* Oh, God has a mouth, too, apparently. What do you know?

So we hear the way the Sabbath becomes a blessing to us is, when we *keep* it – you know, when we get our foot off God's day and rest on it, like He did – then two good things happen. One, it says we start taking delight in the LORD. You know, you can't really have respect for God until you start doing the things that He says. It's not that you respect God first, and then do them – although that's true too – but in this instance, He's saying that, if you even go through the motions, and start to observe the Sabbath – get your foot off His day – then you'll delight in God. And second, God blesses us by actively fulfilling His promise of salvation to us – by being active in our lives – the heritage of Jacob of our father is coming our way.

So those are the two things we pick up right there from that verse. Now, notice I did not look up what modern theology schools say about it. I looked at what *God* wrote to learn what *He* meant by the word *holy* applied to the Sabbath. Now some people say, "But that was the Old Testament, so it doesn't apply today." Well, I believe it does, but only because in other Bible stories, we see New Testament Christians observing the Sabbath. And you say, "Yes, but that was just because they were Jews." Well, that would be an assumption, wouldn't it? You'd have to show that they weren't observing it as a church to prove that it wasn't necessary for Christians to observe it. Just think about what would have happened if they made a big deal about circumcision – which, in the book of Acts, it certainly did almost tear the church apart – what kind of hullabaloo would it

have caused if people wanted to stop keeping the Sabbath? That statement isn't proof in itself, but it's just a question. My point is, there isn't any proof. There's no proof that the Sabbath is not to be observed. And there are other instances where we see Christians observing it. So that's all a story a later time in this series.

So, moving forward with our story today then, let's look at verse 5.

**Genesis 2:5-7** – *When no bush of the field was yet in the land, and no small plant of the land had yet sprung up – for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground – then the LORD formed the man of the dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

So, what do we learn from this? What's God telling us here? Well, here are just a few things.

At first, there was mist before there was rain. We can surmise that the plants might not have come up because there wasn't any rain. It kind of sounds like that, though it doesn't state it directly. But we do know there was mist instead of rain. And I don't know that that's an essential element to know about salvation, but it is a detail.

What else? Well, it also sounds like God had it in mind that the plants needed Adam to take of them – you know, the idea of “dressing it and keeping it.” Yeah, it *did* say that – there were no plants at first. It didn't say, “...because there was no rain.” It just said there was no rain.

The next thing you can learn from reading this is that Adam was made of the things that were already in existence. He was formed out of the elements – and certainly, no one today would argue that humans aren't composed of the elements. We've all seen those charts that say what percentage of water, and what percentage of magnesium, and so on and so forth. So God made the first person. And it's much harder for some of us to believe that than, in all our mind-defying complexity, that it just happened. That's what *God* said happened. He said He formed Adam.

And then, we learn that giving life to Adam, once he was formed, was easy for God. You know, one of the laws of biogenesis is that life comes only from life. So it should make sense to everyone that human life had to come from somewhere, and that all God had to do – once Adam was formed and lying there – was to breathe into him his life. So life comes only from life. And human life came from God – as does *all* life apparently. So we learn that giving us life is easy for God. All He had to do was breathe into him – something to remember when we contemplate a resurrection once we're dead.

Another thing to look at here is, that God makes a Garden with two special trees. So let's start with that in verse 8.

**V-8-17** – *And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

So, two trees in the midst of Garden – the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So do you think that just eating of the trees imparted certain knowledge? Well, that's what it says, doesn't it? It says that. Do you suppose that God could make that happen? Well, of course He could. It's just that since we haven't seen that happen before, doesn't mean that God can't do it. But what if it's a thing like being before the face of God? Is it a symbol or is it real? Well, that's when we ask the question, "What is God trying to tell us here?" More on that later.

Let's think about these four rivers. Reading this in English, it seems somewhat backwards. Usually little streams combine to form big rivers. This tells us that one big river broke up to form four others. And if you at, say, the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, you see that they don't all start in the same place today, so the topography had to change somehow. So the one thing that I can learn from this passage is, that I know where at least two of these rivers are – the two famous ones – the Tigris and the Euphrates. I know where they are. So we can know the general part of the world where the Garden of Eden was located. So that's pretty good, isn't it? God tells us where He put it.

So there were also some boundaries set by God around two trees. They represented something Adam was not supposed to do. He was clearly warned off the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And we know, at first, Adam complies, but it doesn't really say that, does it? So how would we know? Well, we can read the next chapter and see that he violated that boundary and that things went south from there. And, according to what God said, that meant he would die, which he did. But did God mean that he would be put to death if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Well, later we see that he *did* eat of it and he was *not* put to death. He wasn't executed. So, for that to be a true statement, it means that God meant that, if Adam played his cards right, he would not have had to die. However, that's all moot, because he didn't obey, and so he had to die. And he did. So this is a big revelation for us to realize how death came to be a part of the life of every person. What was it Paul said? "As in Adam, all die, and so, in Christ, shall all be made alive."

So the next thing that happens is, God makes Eve. Let's read about that in verse 18.

**V-18** – Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

So let's think about what we learn in that passage. You know, Adam had a lot of work to do, and we know that he needed help. God says He made a help for him – probably not lost on Adam, as he saw all the creatures he was naming, that there were two each – that was their genders.... It's also more than likely that Adam didn't name every single creature that was alive on earth, but only the ones in the Garden – or in his vicinity. So there were two genders for all of them, and yet, with his kind, there was only one. So I'm sure he was aware of that. Well, I'm not *sure* of it. It would seem that he wasn't...you know, when he said, "At last!"

So we learn that Adam needed help and that Eve was made to help him do the work that *they* were given to do – because they were both doing it. Right? You know, all men, except for the most narcissistic, know that they desperately need help. And most people, if they know they desperately need help, and help is provided for them, they're usually very appreciative of it and respectful of the ones helping them. So it's been said by people that God didn't take Eve out of Adam's head to imply that she was to dominate him, nor out of a foot to imply that he was to dominate her, but she was taken out of his side to imply that they were to be a team. Well, that's a human thought on it, but it seems reasonable, doesn't it? But we're separating what in there and what's not, right? So it would seem that he was to be the initiator on the team, and she was to be his supporter or helper. But we would not know for sure about this until we see the other scriptures that more clearly explain what God was doing when He created Eve. Paul wrote much and clarifies this for us in Ephesians. And that's where we learn that men are not to lord it over women, and women are not to lord it over men, but they're to work cooperatively together for the good of their family, the good of their marriage, the good of the community, the good of the tribe, and the good of the nation. The family is the foundation of every nation. And we see the foundation of that relationship starting here, as it was established by God. They lived in a state of nakedness and were not ashamed, like married people do. They were one flesh.

So even though we know next to nothing of the details of the creation of these people, we know

that the point can be well-taken that God orchestrated it all – at every turn – and provided for and loved His created being. And after you read the chapter, consider if you were God trying to communicate with two human beings, could you do any better at communicating that important lesson in such a classic, direct, artistic and concise manner? No. It's beyond genius.

Well, that's it for today. Don't forget to comment on the Website and don't forget to look for the fourth installment of this series, *Bible Stories for Adults*.

Until next time, this is Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.